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SUBJECT: GERMANY H1N1 FLU UPDATE: 834 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 852, B) Berlin 844 and previous.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The number of H1N1 infections in Germany rose by 71 cases to a total of 834 on July 15. Nine federal states reported new cases. The majority of new infections occurred abroad, mainly during travel to Spain. The Federal German States have ordered 50 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine as a precautionary measure in advance of the fall and winter flu season. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) announced in its press briefing July 15 a total of 71 new laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1. This increases the total number of virus cases in Germany to 834. New cases were distributed among nine federal states: Lower-Saxony (22), North Rhine-Westphalia (16), Baden-Wuerttemberg (12), Schleswig-Holstein (7), Berlin (4), Brandenburg (3), Saarland (4), Saxony-Anhalt (2), and Hamburg (1). RKI reports that 57 of the 71 newly confirmed virus cases occurred abroad, mainly from travel to Spain/Mallorca. The majority of all cases display mild symptoms.

¶3. (SBU) North Rhine-Westphalia remains the state with the highest number of virus cases among all German states with a total of 334, followed by Baden-Wuerttemberg (114) and Bavaria (93 cases). About half (419) of all confirmed infections in Germany have resulted from domestic transmission.

50 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine ordered

¶4. (SBU) The health ministers of Germany's federal states agreed on July 14 to order 50 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine to prepare for the fall flu season when a corresponding increase in H1N1 cases is expected. Health experts are particularly concerned that H1N1 will mix with seasonal influenza and mutate in unpredictable ways. There is also concern that the H1N1 virus could mutate later in the year and become more virulent and less susceptible to any new vaccine. Media reports indicate that the 50 million doses are

able to immunize 25 million people against seasonal influenza, which will enable Germany to provide protection for 30 percent of its population. The health ministers will decide next week about possible organization of mass vaccinations in Germany.

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